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ABSTRACT

A four-step approach to planning and implementing a physical education program for children centers on a theme, through which movement skills are developed and refined. In preplanning, a scope and sequence chart are a means of providing a general overview of the school year and the progression involved from year to year. The second step involves observational assessment of pupils so they may be classified as being generally in the initial, elementary, or mature stage of development for the specific patterns being observed. This enables the teacher to implement specific strategies to advance the learner to the next level or stage of development. Once the entry level of the student has been determined, specific means are devised and implemented to foster improvement. It is important that specific skill objectives for each lesson be determined, and that the teacher know when to move on to the next skill theme. The lesson generally consists of four parts: introduction, review of learned skills, the body of the lesson itself, and a summary of the lesson. The final phase consists of continual observation and refocusing of the lesson to achieve a balance between success, challenge, and failure. To accomplish this, constant evaluations and reassessments of pupil progress, interest, and needs enable the teacher to be flexible and to create the most effective learning environment. (JD)

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PLANNING, ORGANIZING & IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILL THEMES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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PLANNING, ORGANIZING & IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILL THEMES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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The theme approach to teaching has become popular in recent years throughout education. Basically, a theme is an organizing center around which the lesson or unit of study is focused. Rather than centering on a particular content area (i.e. games and sports, rhythmics, or self testing activities) and certain activities within that content area a developmental skill theme centers on certain movement skills that are to be developed and refined as the major focus of the physical education lesson. Therefore, children who are at the fundamental movement phase of development are involved in a variety of skill themes designed to advance them to a more mature stage. Boys and girls who have reached the sport skill phase of development are involved in combining and applying their fundamental abilities to a number of sport skill activities.

Planning

A crucial element to the success of any educational program is planning. Without careful planning the physical education class ends up being little more than a glorified recess period. Experience has shown that teachers who fail to plan are really in essence planning to fail. They delude themselves with the notion that they are too competent, too busy or somehow above planning. As a result they invariably run into difficulties and a series of disasters that are unnecessary, unfulfilling, and educationally unsound. The following represents a five step approach to planning and implementing the physical education program.

Preplanning

The first step in the curricular process is to develop a scope and sequence chart. Basically a scope and sequence chart is a blueprint for action. It provides a general overview of the school year (scope) and an idea of the progression involved from year to year (sequence). The scope and sequence chart is the end result of ones preplanning procedures which include inventorying the facilities, equipment, and supplies that are available as well as determining the number of times classes meet per week, and the length of each class period. This important general information along with other considerations such as class size, and alternative facilities during inclement weather provide information necessary to develop a general blueprint for the school year. The exact amount of time to be spent on any one skill theme should remain somewhat flexible. Two to four class periods on some themes is appropriate, returning to them later on in the school year. Or you may wish to spend as long as four weeks on a specific theme. The long term plan should be geared to the developmental needs and interests of your students will require specific appropriate adjustments.

It is suggested, that approximately equal balance be given to skill themes during the course of the school year. The specific amount of time spent on particular skill themes will change as the abilities of individuals or the class change. I have found it helpful to children over the years to focus more heavily on stability skill themes during the initial stage and gradually reducing this amount as they progress on to the elementary and mature stages of fundamental movement ability. I have also found it helpful to increase the emphasis on some skill themes, namely in the manipulative areas, and to remain constant in others as children progress from stage to stage. Figure 1 provides a

brief overview of the suggested approximate amount of time to be spent on skill themes.

Observing and Assessing

After the initial preplanning has been completed it is necessary to observe the students and informally assess where they are at the present time in their movement abilities. After carefully studying this information informally assess your students abilities in one or two movement skills. Based on this observational assessment you can now classify individuals or the group as being generally at the initial, elementary, or mature stage of development for the specific patterns being observed. With this information specific plans for lessons can be made, and care can be taken to utilize methods and techniques designed to move the class to more advanced stages.

It is crucial to the developmental skill theme approach that observation and assessment occur <u>before</u> beginning the planning and implementing phase. In the past teachers have often been guilty of planning and implementing lessons and entire programs on age related criteria. Although it is true that the level of development of one's movement abilities are age related, they are <u>not</u> age dependent. Therefore, we must not assume that all 3 and 4 year olds are at the initial stage, 5 and 6 year olds at the elementary stage and all 7 and 8 year olds at the mature stage even though there is a tendancy to improve with age. Diagnostic teaching requires that we carefully observe and assess the entry level of the learner prior to formulating and implementing specific strategies to advance the learner to the next level or stage of development.

Planning and Implementing

Once the entry level of the students has been determined it becomes a matter of devising and implementing specific means by which improvement will be fostered. It is helpful at this time to develop a unit plan for

	Initial Stage	Elem. Stage	Mature Stage
Locomotor Skill Themes			
Walking and Running	10%	10%	10%
Jumping & Hopping	10	10	10
Skipping & Sliding & Galloping	5	5	5
Leaping & Climbing	5	5	5
Manipulative Skill Themes			
Throwing and Catching	10	10	15
Kicking & Trapping	10	10	10
Dribbling & Volleying	5	5	10
Striking and Rolling	5	5	10
Stability Skill Themes			
Dynamic & Static Balance	25	20	10
Body Rolling	10	10	5
Dodging	5	10	10
	100%	100%	100%

Figure 1. The approximate time percentages devoted to specific skill themes during the school year will vary according to the developmental level of the class.

the theme you are preparing to present. The lessons may be presented in a single unit or dispersed over a longer period of time. Your choice will depend on the age level of the children and the specific theme being presented.

When planning a daily lesson it is important to first determine what the specific skill objectives of that lesson are. These can be sufficiently stated in a few words or may be presented in elaborate behavioral terms. Personally, I am not convinced of the necessity of elaborate systems for stating objectives and writing them out for each lesson. I do not know of any experienced teacher who does even though we stress their importance in almost all methods classes. Experienced and successful teachers, do however, always have in mind what the objective their lessons are even though they may not be carefully written out or stated in behavioral terms. Objectives are important. It is only the elaborate and detailed nature of stating them that is often advocated that is of questionable value.

Once the objectives of the lesson have been determined it will be necessary to focus on the actual content of the lesson itself. The lesson generally consists of four parts: Introduction, Review, Body, and Summary, (See Figure 2). The introductory portion of the lesson is short lasting from five to seven minutes. It is designed to quickly get the children organized and involved in a vigorous activity. The introductory activity may serve as a warm-up activity or as a lead-in activity for the lesson to follow. The keys to successful introductory activities are total participation, vigorous activity, and ease of organization. Also, the introductory activity often serves as an important way "burning" off excess energy enabling the children to focus their attention on the lesson to come.

The review is the second part of the lesson. It generally lasts from 5 to 10 minutes and provides a brief time to focus on the highlights of the previous lesson. Lengthy explanations and discussions of the previous lesson should be avoided. Rather, an appropriate activity coupled with strategic teacher comments should be the major aspect of this portion of the lesson. Remember, the reason for review is to help the child make the link between the material that was covered in the previous lesson with that which will be presented as new material in the body of the present lesson.

The body of the lesson is the central focus of the lesson. It has the greatest amount of time devoted to it and serves as the core of the entire lesson. The body of the lesson may range from 15 to 25 minutes in length, depending upon the total time alotted, and contains the new material to be taught that day and the application of that material to appropriate activities. The body of the lesson centers on a variety of problem solving experiences and/or skill drill activities depending on the developmental level of the class. Children at the fundamental movement pattern level will benefit from a variety of exploratory, guided discovery and skill development activities. The body of the lesson may also involve skill implementation through a variety of individualized or game activities. However, care should be taken to focus on the problem-solving aspect of the skill with efforts concentrated at progressing to higher stages of ability rather than the playing of games. Only after the skill has been reasonably mastered should it be incorporated into game type activities.

The summary is the last part of the lesson. It is an important aspect even though it may last only 2 or 3 minutes. The summary provides the instructor an opportunity to bring closure to the lesson by helping the children recall what was wored on during the lesson and whey they took part

Figure 2 Time Frane For A Typical Lesson

INTRODUCTION:	
Begin the lesson with an easy to organize, active, maximum participation activity to be used as a warm-up activity, or lead-in to the body of the lesson.	5-7 minutes
REVIEW:	
Briefly go over the main points of the previous lesson using a specific activity and key teaching phrases.	5-10 minutes
BODY:	
A. Utilize a variety of exploratory guided discovery or skill development activities focusing on improvement.	10-20 Minutes
B. Implementation: Incorporate the new skill into an appropriate individualized ativity or low level game activity	5-10 minutes
SUMMARY:	
A. Review: Briefly review the highlights of the days lesson	3 minutes
B. Dismissal: Rather than running to the doors provide for a fun novel and challenging dismissal activity	2 minutes
	30-50 minute total

in the activities that they did. This also permits time to highlight what will be presented in the next lesson to arrange for orderly dismissal.

Evaluating and Revising

Each of the steps outlined above is important to the successful execution of the daily lesson. Care should be taken to plan all aspects carefully in order to maximize the impact of the lesson. The effectiveness of your lessons should be periodically evaluated and adjustments made in the methods, techniques, and approaches used to convey the skill theme. Without periodic evaluation it is impossible to know what has been achieved in terms of improved abilities and to plan effectively for subsequent lessons. Therefore it is suggested that the teacher informally assess pupil progress on a regular basis. At the preschool and elementary school level the key to successful evaluation is to keep it simple. There is little need for elaborate diagnostic procedures. As long as you are familiar with the characteristics of the initial, elementary, and mature stages of a skill theme simple observational assessment will suffice in most cases. Based on your informaal evaluation of progress or the lack of progress by individuals or the class you will need to make modifications in your remaining lessons. It is easy to see that the process of constantly monitoring pupil progress provides the teacher with information, necessary for planning effective, challenging and developmentally appropriate lessons. Figure 3 provides an overview of the cyclic nature of the steps in the planning process.

Moving On

Probably the most crucial but least scientific aspect of the entire planning procedure is to know when to move on to another skill theme. It is impossible to provide anything more than general guideline's as to how much time should be spent on a particular skill theme. No two groups, classes, or individuals are exactly alike therefore no universal

formula of number of lessons, number of minutes or percentage can be provided. Experienced teachers, however, seem to have a sense of when it is time to move to another theme. Some of the clues that they use are:

1. The percentage of children within the class who have achieved the objectives of the unit.
2. The percentage of children who have shown a reasonable degree of improvement beyond their entry level.
3. The interest that the children display in the lessons.
4. The amount of time the children spend on task.

Ideally, the teacher wants all children to achieve 100 percent success rate throughout the entire curriculum. This, however, is not possible given the normal variation in natural abilities, learning styles and other factors. However, the experienced teacher continues to strive for 100 percent success being fully aware that she/he will have to individualize her/his teaching in order to maximize this elusive goal. Also she/he will not be discouraged with less than perfection. She/he will adopt an attitude that success is equal to improvement, and that improvement is relative to the individuals entry level and the movement challenges presented. For example, if the children are assessed at the onset of the unit to be at the initial level in volleying and striking and only achieve the elementary level after several lessons there still has been improvement even though the mature level has not reached. Also, the teacher can structure her movement challenges in such a way as to minimize or maximize success. A high success rate is desirable but the movement challenges must be structured in such a way that they are challenging but not overwhelming. Therefore, the teacher needs to carefully and continually observe and refocus the lesson in order to achieve a balance between success, challenge, and failure.

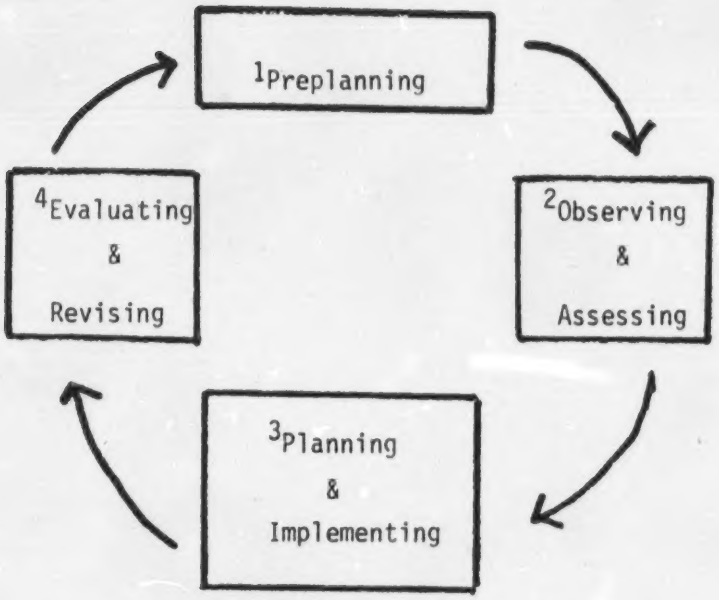

Figure 3 Steps in the Planning Process

Subtle clues of frustration, boredom, inattention, and general off-task activity are good indicators that it is time to refocus your lessons or move on to another skill theme. As a general rule of thumb it is better to spend two or three lessons on a skill theme with young children and returning to it once or twice during the school year rather than focusing all your attention on it at any one time. Older children tend to benefit from longer periods of time on particular skill themes but it is suggested that you not spend beyond a maximum of eight to ten lessons in any one or two themes at one time.

Summary

The successful teacher recognizes the need for a scope and sequence chart that provides a blueprint for the physical education program. The successful teacher also recognizes the need for observational assessment, and detailed planning but is never constrained by these plans. A constant process of evaluating and reassessing pupil progress, interest, and needs enables the successful teacher to be flexible and to be able to refocus lessons in order to create the most effective learning environment.

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